

Nashville District

Human Resources Newsletter

"News You Can Use"

Issue 01-08-04
01 August 2004

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep Nashville District employees informed about personnel issues, concerns, and topics. You are encouraged to review the information and disseminate to your organization. If there are particular areas of interest that you would like to see addressed in future issues, an article of general interest, or general comments, please contact John Restey at 615-736-5538 or John.G.Restey@lrn02.usace.army.mil.

Coming Events:

**FEGLI (Federal Employee Group Life Insurance)-
OPEN SEASON—1 SEPT-30 SEPT 2004**

General News:

THE HATCH ACT

It's election time again! It's time to remind all civilian employees of the restrictions under the Hatch Act on political activities.

Can I make a contribution to the campaign of a partisan candidate, or to a political party or organization?

Yes.

Can I help organize a political fundraiser?

An employee is allowed to organize a fundraiser, including supplying names for the invitation list, as long as he/she does not personally solicit, accept, or receive contributions.

Can my name appear on invitations to a political fundraiser as a sponsor or point of contact?

No.

Can I speak at a political fundraiser?

An employee is allowed to give a speech or keynote address at a political fundraiser, as long as he or she is not on duty, and does not solicit political contributions.

Can I attend a state or national party convention? If so, in what capacity?

Yes. A federal employee may serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a state or national party convention.

If I run as a candidate for public office in a nonpartisan election, does the Hatch Act allow me to ask for and accept political contributions?

An employee who is a candidate for public office in a nonpartisan election is not barred by the Hatch Act from soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions

May I distribute brochures for a political party to people arriving at a polling place on Election Day?

Yes.

Answers to other questions about allowable political activity by federal employees can also be found in Hatch Act regulations in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. More information can also be found at www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm <<http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm>>.

NATIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL SYSTEM (NSPS)

The FY 04 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a new personnel system for its civilian employees. The NSPS is expected to deliver new, more flexible and streamlined processes with regard to recruitment and hiring, advancement and promotion, reduction-in-force, and employee appeals.

The law allows the DoD to establish new rules for how civilian employees are hired, assigned, compensated, promoted, and disciplined, within the framework of merit principles, accommodation of veterans' preference, and respect for employees' right to bargain. With that authority, the Department will develop a flexible and fair system that will help DoD attract, retain, reward, and grow a civilian workforce to meet the national security demands of the twenty-first century.

The NSPS will be phased in over the next two years, and all those employees, supervisors, managers, and human resources professionals will be trained on the new rules.

For more information on the NSPS and to read periodic updates, go to www.cpol.army.mil <<http://www.cpol.army.mil>>.

A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or related substances. To affect individuals adversely, these substances must usually be inhaled, be ingested, or enter through cuts in the skin. Some biological agents such as smallpox can be spread from person to person while others like anthrax do not cause contagious diseases. Different than a conventional explosive or attack, biological attacks may not be immediately evident. Some of the normal indicators of this type of attack would be an increase in the number of illnesses reported by local health care workers or a large number of dead or sick animals throughout your area. These attacks are normally discovered by emergency response personnel in reaction to the indicators listed above.

What Should You Do?

In the event that you witness a suspicious attack using an unknown substance, there are a number of things you can do to protect yourself and your family. First, leave the immediate area as quickly as possible and protect yourself by finding something to place over your nose and mouth. Any layered material like a tshirt, handkerchief, or towel may help prevent particles of the substance from entering your respiratory system. If you have a long-sleeved shirt or jacket, they would be useful in covering exposed skin. They may also prevent bacteria from entering cuts you may have. If you are indoors and the suspected attack takes place outdoors, remain inside unless told otherwise by authorities.

Report the attack to emergency personnel.

You can also take precautionary measures such as keeping shots up-to-date and making sure you practice good personal hygiene. A healthy body will be able to better fight any potential contamination by biological agents. In the event that anyone around you becomes ill, do not automatically assume that it is from the suspected attack as many of the symptoms from these attacks resemble

Health and Benefits:

EXPEDITING YOUR RETIREMENT

If you are now considering retirement, the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) strongly recommends that you submit your retirement application package to the ABC-C within 90-120 days in advance of your intended retirement date. A timely submission will help ensure a timely first annuity payment from the Office of Personnel Management.

ABC-C statistics indicate, for example, that about 75% of the employees who submitted retirement applications within 1-15 days before retirement may encounter a delay in annuity receipt.

It is in your best interest to submit your retirement application to the ABC-C within the recommended timeframe. Although there may be situations that prevent an early submission, ABC-C strives for timely application processing and continues to provide service of the highest quality to Department of the Army employees.

To learn more about the retirement process, visit the ABC-C web site at [<https://www.abc.army.mil>](https://www.abc.army.mil).

Food for Thought:

When something happens to you, good or bad, consider what it means. There's a purpose to life's events, to teach you how to laugh more or not to cry too hard.

